

Gloom Stalker 5 / Assassin 4 / Champion 3

“ **Your Role:** Alpha strike archer. Start every fight from stealth, surprise enemies, and unload 7+ attacks on turn one -- most of them automatic critical hits. End fights before enemies take a single turn.

At a Glance

Race: Wood Half-Elf (extra movement, Darkvision, Stealth proficiency, Fey Ancestry) **Other strong picks:** Halfling (Lightfoot -- reroll natural 1s, Advantage on Stealth), Deep Gnome (Superior Darkvision, Gnome Cunning), Githyanki (free Misty Step at level 5) **Background:** Urchin (Sleight of Hand + Stealth)

Stats: STR 8 / **DEX 16** / CON 14 / INT 8 / WIS 14 / CHA 10 DEX is your primary stat. Attacks, damage, AC, and Initiative all scale with it. WIS 14 for Ranger spells and Perception.

Note on DEX 16 vs 17: Since Karlach gets Auntie Ethel's Hair (+1 STR), start at 16 DEX and take two +2 DEX ASIs (Ranger 4 and Rogue 4) to reach 20.

Level-by-Level

Level 1 -- Ranger 1

Start Ranger for medium armor, shields, martial weapons, and DEX + STR saving throw proficiencies.

You gain:

- **Favoured Enemy:** Bounty Hunter (Investigation proficiency + Restrain spell) or Ranger Knight (heavy armor proficiency + History)
- **Natural Explorer:** Urban Tracker (Stealth bonus) or Wasteland Wanderer: Cold/Fire/Poison (damage resistance)

Gameplay: Equip Lae'zel's Githyanki Half Plate (15 AC) if she's not using it, grab a longbow, and start shooting from high ground for the +2 attack roll bonus.

Level 2 -- Ranger 2

You gain:

- **Fighting Style: Archery** -- +2 to ranged weapon attack rolls. This is enormous. It offsets the Sharpshooter -5 penalty later. Non-negotiable pick.
 - **Spellcasting**
 - **Spells (pick 2):**
 - **Hunter's Mark** -- Bonus action, Concentration. Deal an extra 1d6 damage on every hit against the marked target. Moves to new targets when the current one dies (bonus action). Your sustained damage buff for the entire game.
 - **Longstrider** (no Concentration, +3m movement until long rest) or **Ensnaring Strike** (root a target on hit, STR save)
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Level 3 -- Ranger 3 (Gloom Stalker)

The subclass that defines the build.

You gain:

- **Dread Ambusher** -- On the first turn of combat, your movement speed increases by 3m and you gain an extra attack that deals an additional 1d8 damage. This extra attack is on top of your normal attacks. Free burst on turn one.
- **Dread Ambusher: Hide** -- After making a Dread Ambusher attack, use a bonus action to Hide (become invisible until your next turn or until you attack/cast). Alpha strike then disappear.
- **Umbral Shroud** -- Become invisible if you're obscured (in shadow or darkness). Costs nothing. Incredible for re-stealth mid-combat.
- **Superior Darkvision** -- See in darkness up to 24m.
- **Gloom Stalker Spells (always prepared):** Disguise Self, Fog Cloud

New Spell: Goodberry (create 40 HP of healing berries, great out-of-combat healing)

First turn at level 3 (from stealth): 1 normal attack + 1 Dread Ambusher attack (+ 1d8 bonus) = 2 attacks total. Then Hide as bonus action. Enemies can't target you.

Level 4 -- Ranger 4

You gain:

- **Feat: Sharpshooter** -- This is the build-defining feat.
 - **All-In (toggle):** Your ranged weapon attacks deal +10 damage but take -5 to the attack roll. With Archery (+2), high DEX (+3-5), and Advantage from stealth/high ground, the -5 is easily offset. Every arrow hits like a truck.
 - Ignore half and three-quarters cover.
 - No Disadvantage on long-range attacks.

With Sharpshooter active, each arrow deals: Weapon die (1d8 longbow) + DEX mod + Sharpshooter (+10) + Hunter's Mark (1d6) + Dread Ambusher (1d8 on first attack) = roughly 25-30 damage per hit at level 4.

Level 5 -- Ranger 5

Major power spike: Extra Attack.

You gain:

- **Extra Attack** -- Two weapon attacks per Action. With Dread Ambusher on turn one, that's 3 attacks on the first round.
- **2nd-Level Ranger Spell Slots**
- **Gloom Stalker Spell (always prepared):** Misty Step (bonus action teleport)

New Spell:

- **Pass Without Trace** -- Concentration. You and all nearby allies get +10 to Stealth checks. **This is how your entire 8-person party initiates from stealth reliably.** Cast this, have everyone stealth, and guarantee Surprise on enemies. Absolutely critical.

Turn 1 from stealth at level 5: 3 attacks (Extra Attack + Dread Ambusher), all with Sharpshooter + Hunter's Mark. If enemies are Surprised, you have Advantage on all of them.

Level 6 -- Rogue 1

You gain:

- **Sneak Attack (1d6)** -- Extra damage once per turn if you have Advantage or an ally is within 1.5m of the target. You'll almost always have Advantage from stealth, high ground, or Surprise.
 - **Expertise (pick 2):** Stealth + Sleight of Hand (or Perception). Double your proficiency bonus for those skills. Your Stealth becomes absurdly high.
 - **Bonus Skill Proficiency**
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Level 7 -- Rogue 2

You gain:

- **Cunning Action** -- Dash, Disengage, or Hide as a bonus action. Huge for an archer: reposition with Dash, avoid opportunity attacks with Disengage, or Hide to set up another round of Advantage.
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Level 8 -- Rogue 3 (Assassin)

The second pillar clicks into place.

You gain:

- **Assassinate: Ambush** -- Any hit against a Surprised creature is an **automatic critical hit**. Stealth -> Surprise -> every single attack on turn one auto-crits. With Sharpshooter, Extra Attack, Dread Ambusher, and all dice doubled from crits, the damage is astronomical.
- **Assassinate: Initiative** -- Advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn yet. Even without Surprise, you get Advantage on the first round if you beat their Initiative.
- **Assassin's Alacrity** -- At the start of combat (if you initiated from stealth), your Action AND Bonus Action are immediately restored. This effectively gives you a "pre-turn" before your actual first turn. You act twice before enemies move.
- **Sneak Attack scales to 2d6**

Turn 1 from stealth at level 8:

1. Pre-turn (Alacrity): 3 attacks (Extra Attack + Dread Ambusher), all auto-crits
 2. Turn 1: 2 attacks (Extra Attack), still with Advantage
 3. **Total: 5 attacks on turn one**, the first 3 are guaranteed crits
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Level 9 -- Rogue 4

You gain:

- **Feat:** +2 DEX to reach 20 (if starting 16: 16 -> 18 at Ranger 4 via Sharpshooter... wait, Sharpshooter doesn't give +DEX. Let me clarify: take +2 DEX here to go from 18 -> 20, having taken +2 DEX at Ranger 4 to go 16 -> 18).
 - If DEX is already 20: **Alert** (+5 Initiative, can't be surprised). Going first is everything.
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Level 10 -- Fighter 1

You gain:

- **Fighting Style: Defense** -- +1 AC while wearing armor. You already have Archery from Ranger. Stack Defense for survivability.
 - **Second Wind** -- Bonus action self-heal (1d10 + Fighter level). Emergency HP recovery.
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Level 11 -- Fighter 2

Action Surge. The third pillar.

You gain:

- **Action Surge** -- Once per short rest, gain an additional Action. Turn one from stealth becomes:
 1. Alacrity pre-turn: 3 attacks (all crits if Surprised)
 2. Turn 1 Action: 2 attacks
 3. Action Surge Action: 2 more attacks
 4. **Total: 7 attacks on turn one**

This is the build at its peak damage. 7 Sharpshooter attacks, 3+ auto-crits, all in a single turn. With proper gear, this can deal 200+ damage before any enemy acts.

Level 12 -- Fighter 3 (Champion)

You gain:

- **Improved Critical Hit** -- Weapon attacks crit on 19 or 20 (instead of just 20). Combined with Assassinate's auto-crits on Surprised enemies, even on subsequent rounds you crit twice as often.
 - *Alternative:* Battle Master gives 4 Superiority Dice and maneuvers like Precision Attack (+d8 to hit, offsetting Sharpshooter's -5), Trip Attack (knock prone), and Menacing Attack (frighten). More flexible, but Champion's passive crit range works on every attack automatically.
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The Alpha Strike (Turn 1 from Stealth)

1. **Alacrity pre-turn:** 3 attacks (Extra Attack + Dread Ambusher) -- all auto-crits vs Surprised
2. **Turn 1 Action:** 2 attacks -- still with Advantage
3. **Action Surge:** 2 more attacks
4. **Total: 7 attacks.** With Elixir of Bloodlust, killing anything grants another Action = **9 attacks.**

Each arrow with Sharpshooter + Hunter's Mark: ~25-35 damage. On crits, double all dice. Total turn-one damage: **200-400+** before enemies act.

Gear to Grab

Act 1

Titanstring Bow *Where:* Sold by Brem in Zhentarim Hideout (under Waukeen's Rest). Also at Grat the Trader in Goblin Camp. *Why:* Adds your STR modifier to damage. With Elixir of Hill Giant Strength (STR 21, +5 mod), every arrow gets +5 extra damage on top of DEX and Sharpshooter.

Elixir of Hill Giant Strength *Where:* Craft from Hill Giant Fingernails + any sublimate. Buy fingernails from vendors. *Why:* Sets STR to 21. Normally useless for DEX builds, but with Titanstring Bow, adds +5 per arrow. Craft in bulk.

Gloves of Archery *Where:* Goblin Camp, Shattered Sanctum area (locked chest near torture room) *Why:* +2 to ranged weapon attack damage. Free damage boost until Act 3.

Killer's Sweetheart (ring) *Where:* Gauntlet of Shar, Self-Same Trial room *Why:* When you kill a creature, your next attack is a guaranteed critical hit. On your alpha turn, your first kill procs this for a guaranteed crit on the next attack. Extends the crit chain into Action Surge attacks.

Haste Helm *Where:* Blighted Village, locked chest (X: 29, Y: 405) *Why:* Start-of-combat Momentum (+1.5m movement). Helps reposition on the crucial first turn.

Disintegrating Night Walkers *Where:* Grymforge, looted from True Soul Nere *Why:* Free Misty Step per short rest, immune to web/entangle. Crucial mobility.

Caustic Band (ring) *Where:* Sold by Derryth in Myconid Colony (Underdark) *Why:* +2 acid damage on all weapon attacks. Flat damage boost on every arrow.

Act 2

Yuan-Ti Scale Mail *Where:* Sold by Quartermaster Talli at Last Light Inn *Why:* 15 + DEX (max 2) = 17 AC. Grants **Advantage on Initiative rolls**. Going first is everything for this build.

Elixir of Bloodlust *Where:* Craft from Worg Fang + any sublimate. Buy ingredients at Last Light Inn. *Why:* Kill an enemy = 5 temp HP + extra Action. Combined with Alacrity + Action Surge + Bloodlust, you can potentially have 4 Actions on turn one (9 attacks).

Oil of Accuracy *Where:* Craft from Ashes of Balsam + sublimate *Why:* +2 to attack rolls for the coated weapon. Stacks with Archery. Further offsets Sharpshooter's -5. Brew in bulk.

Boots of Speed *Where:* Last Light Inn vendors *Why:* Double movement speed as bonus action (1/short rest). Sprint to high ground, then unload.

Act 3

Gontr Mael (longbow) *Where:* Steel Watch Foundry, from the Steel Watcher Titan boss *Why:* Legendary +3 bow. Celestial Haste (free Haste 1/long rest), enemies you hit glow for Advantage on next attack (Guiding Bolt aura). Best ranged weapon in the game.

Legacy of the Masters (gloves) *Where:* Sold by Dammon, Lower City *Why:* +2 to weapon attack rolls and damage. Direct power boost. Replaces Gloves of Archery.

Boots of Persistence *Where:* Sold by Dammon at Forge of the Nine, Lower City *Why:* Freedom of Movement (immune to difficult terrain, paralysis, restraint) + Legendary Resistance 1/short rest.

Cloak of Displacement *Where:* Wyrms Crossing, Danthelon's Dancing Axe shop *Why:* Attackers have Disadvantage until they hit you. Resets each turn.

Quick Tips

“ **ALWAYS initiate from stealth.** Cast Pass Without Trace (+10 Stealth for all 8 party members), position on high ground, and stealth. Your entire alpha strike depends on Surprise.

“ **Elixir of Bloodlust is mandatory for peak performance.** Kill anything on your alpha turn and Bloodlust gives you ANOTHER Action. 9 attacks in one turn.

“ **High ground = +2 to ranged attack rolls.** With Archery (+2) and 20 DEX (+5), that's +9 to hit, making Sharpshooter's -5 effectively only -1.

“ **Hide after your alpha turn.** Dread Ambusher: Hide or Cunning Action: Hide makes you invisible. Enemies can't target you.

“ **Killer's Sweetheart extends crit chains.** First kill procs a guaranteed crit on your next attack. Combined with Assassinate auto-crits, you might crit 5+ times on turn one.

“ **Pass Without Trace is a party buff.** +10 Stealth for ALL 8 party members. This character enables the whole group to initiate from stealth.

“ **Action Surge recharges on short rest.** Use it every fight. Short rest between encounters.

Party Gear Assignments

This build gets: Gontr Mael, Killer's Sweetheart, Yuan-Ti Scale Mail, Legacy of the Masters, Cloak of Displacement

Passes to others:

- Helldusk Armor -> Paladin/Hexblade. You wear medium armor.
- Helldusk Gloves -> Karlach (she attacks 4-6 times per turn). *Backup:* Legacy of the Masters.
- Helldusk Boots -> Astarion. *Backup:* Disintegrating Night Walkers or Boots of Speed.
- Nyxulna -> Karlach. You use bows, not thrown weapons.
- Auntie Ethel's Hair -> Karlach (+1 STR). Start at 16 DEX and take two +2 DEX ASIs to reach 20.
- Birthright -> Paladin/Hexblade. CHA is useless for you.

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